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Chairperson: Ms. Sandoval (Vice-Chairperson) ..... (Guatemala)

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In the absence of Ms. Lintonen (Finland), Ms. Sandoval (Guatemala), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 54: Sustainable development (*continued*) (A/62/343, A/62/356 and A/62/486; A/C.2/62/2; A/C.2/62/L.5)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (*continued*) (A/62/262 and A/62/376)

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(d) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind (*continued*) (A/62/78-E/2007/62 and A/62/276)

(e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (*continued*) (A/62/276; A/C.2/62/7)

(f) Convention on Biological Diversity (*continued*) (A/62/276)

(g) Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its twenty-fourth session (*continued*) (A/62/25)

(h) Sustainable mountain development (*continued*) (A/62/292)

(i) Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy (*continued*) (A/62/208; A/C.2/62/8)

1. **Mr. Prasartkul** (Thailand) said that his Government was trying to keep up with the demands of globalization while practising moderation in consumption and shielding the economy from the impact of adverse internal and external changes. Under its policy of fostering economic sufficiency, it promoted agricultural practices that would ensure food security, as well as forest conservation, sustainable energy development and prudence in financial practices. The mechanisms envisaged in the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change must be implemented with due regard for the needs of developing countries. The clean development mechanism was not about foreign direct investment, but about technology transfer and capacity-building; it therefore required a collaborative effort between the developed and the developing worlds.

2. The Asian tsunami of 2004 had taught his country that preventive measures, including early warning systems and knowledge-building, were vital. Thailand had contributed US$ 10 million to the multi-donor voluntary trust fund for tsunami early warning arrangements in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia, or Tsunami Regional Trust Fund. His delegation thanked the Swedish Government for its donation of an additional US$ 2.5 million for the Fund. New and renewable energy sources such as biofuels, together with the practice of energy efficiency, must be explored. Technology transfer involving sustainable and clean energy must be strongly promoted, without any hidden agendas or barriers to the access of developing countries. Thanks to the clean development mechanism, Thailand had been able to implement a number of projects, including those that would transform agricultural waste and by-products into alternative energy sources.

3. **Mr. Abu Assamen** (Jordan) said that his country was committed to protecting biodiversity, and had set aside natural reserves throughout the country to protect different ecosystems. It had adopted a national energy efficiency strategy that was aimed at achieving sustainable economic development and reducing harm to the environment through increased reliance on renewable energy technologies. A national energy research centre had been established.

4. **Mr. Shinyo** (Japan) said that a post-2012 framework must have the participation of all emitters and must promote both environmental protection and economic growth. Countries must begin immediately to adapt to climate change. It was especially important to take action in the areas of disaster risk reduction and preparedness. The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 provided useful guidelines. The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction would be useful in promoting the implementation of the Hyogo Framework. Japan would create a new financial mechanism to support developing countries that stood

ready to coordinate their policies actively in response to Japan's proposal. Special attention would be paid to developing countries and, in particular, those that were exposed to dangers such as submersion of land and desertification as a result of emissions by other countries. Minimizing emissions from deforestation was vitally important for mitigation. Adequate land-use management should be promoted, and initiatives such as the non-legally binding agreement on all types of forests, adopted at the seventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, needed to be implemented appropriately. Japan was also willing to cooperate in the fight against illegal logging and to address the issue of deforestation at the upcoming session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to be held in Bali.

5. International environmental governance was crucial to efforts to effectively address environmental problems. Japan appreciated all the work being done by the co-chairs for the informal consultations on international environmental governance and would continue to join in constructive discussions on the most effective mechanism for advancing the Organization's environmental activities. Recalling that 2008 had been declared the International Year of Sanitation, he stressed the need for more concerted and global action to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of halving the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015.

6. In March 2006, Japan had announced its Action Plan for the United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014). He encouraged Member States to take advantage of the Decade to promote education and public awareness for sustainable development.

7. **Mr. Muburi-Muita** (Kenya) said that Kenya was committed to ensuring that the principles of sustainable development guided the formulation of sector-specific plans and strategies. It was unfortunate that the Commission on Sustainable Development had been unable to reach agreement on the thematic cluster of issues on its agenda for the fifteenth session. His delegation hoped that the Commission's discussions on the next thematic cluster would be more productive. Kenya looked forward to a successful outcome of the Bali Climate Change Conference to be held in December. A successful outcome must include an adaptation strategy with stable funding specifically for the most vulnerable countries, particularly in Africa. His delegation was concerned that implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification was not being accorded the seriousness it deserved. He hoped the Conference of the Parties would endorse the budget for the biennium 2008-2009 at its first extraordinary session, since it had not reached agreement at its eighth regular session.

8. Kenya was deeply concerned at the continued loss of biological diversity and called for the urgent conclusion of negotiations on the international regime on access and benefit-sharing of genetic resources and their derivatives. Kenya welcomed the report of the twenty-fourth session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, in particular, decision 24/5 on waste management, and requested the Secretariat, in consultation with others, to identify aspects of waste management for consideration at the tenth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. The financial resource base of the United Nations Environment Programme must be increased.

9. **Mr. Riofrio** (Ecuador), noting with satisfaction the outcome of the High-level Event on Climate Change, stressed the importance of international technical and financial cooperation to develop national capacities to reduce the risk of natural disasters through sustainable development. The first session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Geneva in June 2007, represented a step forward in coordinating the efforts of all stakeholders. It was essential to guarantee adequate financial support for follow-up of the Hyogo Framework for Action and for the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. Ecuador was particularly vulnerable to natural disasters and was firmly committed to the implementation of the Hyogo Framework.

10. **Mr. Thapaliya** (Nepal) said that poor mountain communities were particularly vulnerable to the impact of climate change and required special attention in that regard. Adequate funding should be provided for environmental services and investment in public rural infrastructure in mountain regions. Development programmes that would directly benefit poor mountain people should be promoted. The success of mountain development activities was contingent on combined and coordinated development collaboration among all stakeholders, including the mountain communities. His

delegation was encouraged by the international collaborative efforts and multi-stakeholder approach of the Mountain Partnership in promoting knowledge management, exchange of experiences and response to specific needs of mountain communities. It also appreciated the work of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development in promoting research, capacity-building and gender focus for the sustainable livelihood of mountain people across the Hindu-Kush Himalayan region. Such regional and transboundary cooperation should be fostered so as to improve policy coordination, facilitate research and information analysis, and bolster joint action to respond to real needs. Chapter 13 of Agenda 21 rightly underlined the need for focused and urgent attention to sustainable mountain development. Similarly, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation in paragraph 42 highlighted the importance of implementing programmes to promote sustainable livelihoods and diversification of mountain resources.

11. In Nepal, three quarters of the land was mountainous. The Government had adopted development policies and plans aimed at protecting the natural environment and the rich biodiversity of the country. The role of local communities in environmental conservation had been encouraged, and emphasis was also placed on the promotion of employment, environmentally friendly development activities, environmental education and public and private initiatives boosting awareness and promoting biodiversity and inclusive development.

12. **Mr. Teshome** (Ethiopia) said that good environmental stewardship meant that the rising standards of living of the present generation could not be attained at the expense of the quality of life of future generations. The devastating effects of global warming were being felt in poor countries, whose agricultural production was suffering as a result. Nor was the developed world protected from those effects, whose acceleration in recent years was of grave concern.

13. In Ethiopia, climate change was causing severe weather variability, loss of pastoral land, droughts, soil erosion, sedimentation of dams and shifts in agro-climatic zones. To reverse environmental degradation and fight poverty at the same time, his Government had adopted a comprehensive environmental policy, created regional agencies and developed strategies aimed at combating desertification and protecting biodiversity. It had also developed an environmental and social management framework and was implementing a sustainable dry land management programme in 81 drought-prone districts. Additional human resources, information and funding were needed to continue with those efforts.

14. The reviews of Agenda 21 and the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development had revealed little progress in implementing the sustainable development agenda, especially in Africa. Developing countries needed help from the industrialized countries to implement environmental protection policies. Environmental debt-swap arrangements could help reduce the overexploitation of natural resources. Freer access to international markets for the goods and services of developing countries would also help them empower local communities, introduce clean technologies and meet the Millennium Development Goals. His Government expected more tangible action from the international community on implementing the Kyoto Protocol, conserving biodiversity and mitigating the effects of drought and desertification.

15. **Mr. Dall'Oglio** (Observer for the International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that the reports on the implementation of United Nations environmental conventions contained in document A/62/276 showed that the link between the environment and migration was receiving greater attention. To facilitate a more in-depth analysis of the problem, IOM proposed the following definition, which used inclusive terminology: "Environmental migrants are persons or groups of persons who, for compelling reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are obliged or have to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad". The definition covered persons affected by sudden natural disasters and by gradual deterioration of conditions, and addressed both internal and international migration. To advance dialogue with Member States and other stakeholders, IOM would hold a session on climate change and migration at its upcoming Council meeting and, together with the Government of Greece, was planning a conference for early 2008 on human security and climate change.

16. Climate change, whether catastrophic or gradual, had enormous implications for human security. The risks to public health alone were considerable.

Furthermore, the security of environmental migrants could be undermined by conflicts arising from disputes over resources. Principles and approaches that were already applied in other migration cases should be assessed for their relevance in environmentally induced migration, since early planning and action could limit forced migration and mitigate the impacts of unmanaged mobility. Policy informed by inter-ministerial and public participation, as well as budgetary support for long-term planning, were needed.

17. Since migration and environmental processes were transnational phenomena, they could be usefully addressed through cooperation between States, supported by regional consultative processes for dialogue, research and capacity-building. Multilateral resettlement arrangements might be warranted, and improved cooperation in disaster preparedness and management was crucial.

18. **Ms. Filip** (Observer for the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)) pointed out that climate change was the ultimate challenge to the long-term sustainability of life on Earth. At its 116th Assembly in early 2007, IPU had adopted a political declaration that called on parliaments to reinforce climate change policy and legislation and to enhance international cooperation on climate change. Members had pledged to raise the issue of climate change in their respective parliaments and to address questions to ministers regarding their preparation for the Bali Climate Change Conference scheduled for December 2007.

19. Parliaments had been asked to raise awareness of the urgent need to build support, across party lines, for United Nations-led initiatives on climate change and to mainstream the issue in their agendas in order to make substantive progress on both mitigation and adaptation measures. The Union would also encourage closer networking between Parliaments, their specialized committees and grass-roots organizations.

20. In response to the Secretary-General's call to eliminate wasteful practices, IPU was mapping its own carbon footprint and preparing energy-saving solutions and reduction targets. It had also begun budgeting for carbon offsets to apply to official travel.

21. **Mr. Shervani** (India) said that an integrated approach was needed to sustainable development, one that encompassed economic growth, social development and environmental protection. Greater efforts were needed to ensure good governance at the international level and in international trade and finance, as had been stressed in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. India was engaged in numerous activities under the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, and he called on the donor community to provide greater financial and technical support for the Strategy.

22. Economic growth was imperative for India, but environmental degradation and climate change were also of deep concern. His Government had taken numerous measures to ensure sustainable development through energy efficiency and the promotion of renewable sources of energy. Its Green India project was the world's largest reforestation project, covering six million hectares of degraded forest. A national environmental policy had been adopted in 2006 to mainstream environmental concerns in all development activities.

23. Unfortunately, developing countries bore a disproportionate share of the negative impact of climate change and lacked the resources to tackle the problem. He hoped that developed countries would commit themselves, at the upcoming Bali Conference, to more stringent emissions reduction targets for the post-2012 period under the Kyoto Protocol. India pledged, for its part, that its per capita greenhouse gas emissions would not increase beyond those of the developed countries.

24. Addressing climate change in developing countries would also require the transfer of clean technologies at preferential rates. That would entail changes to the intellectual property rights regime, to balance rewards for innovators with the common good of mankind. New funding would also be required to support the adaptation efforts of developing countries without diverting funds intended for development.

25. Energy was the *sine qua non* of development. As an energy-deficient country, India emphasized energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy. However, each country must have the freedom to choose its own mix of energy sources, whether that meant fossil fuels or renewable fuels, including nuclear power.

26. Turning to the issue of biodiversity, he welcomed the recommendation made by the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (document

A/62/276, annex III, paragraph 16 (ii)) on the importance of finalizing negotiations on access and benefit-sharing as soon as possible. The regime should include provisions for mandatory disclosure of the country of origin of genetic resources, prior informed consent in intellectual property rights applications and the equitable sharing of benefits.

27. **Mr. Jeenbaev** (Kyrgyzstan) said that mountains were havens of cultural and ecological diversity and were of vital importance for the survival of the entire planet. Mountain ecosystems were particularly vulnerable to climate change and required special protection. The principles of international cooperation on the sustainable development of mountain States had been set forth in the Bishkek Mountain Platform and in General Assembly resolutions and covered, inter alia, raising the living standards of mountain dwellers, preserving their cultural heritage and ensuring their ecological security.

28. Five years after the International Year of Mountains, although there was greater recognition of the importance of the issues, mountainous regions and the people who inhabited them still faced severe problems of poverty reduction, environmental protection and sustainable development. Efforts should be made to capitalize on the progress already achieved. The recommendations in the Secretary-General's report on sustainable mountain development (A/62/292) were highly constructive. International partnerships should be broadened to encompass public associations, the private sector, regional associations and research institutions and should be organized on the basis of thematic, regional and institutional interests. Given the trans-border nature of mountainous regions, regional cooperation — along the lines of the Alpine Convention — was an important tool for sustainable development, and should be linked with relevant multilateral mechanisms. Funding should be increased, including through innovative financial approaches such as debt swapping for sustainable development.

29. In December 2007, the international conference "Bishkek + 5" would be held in the capital of Kyrgyzstan, to be followed by the second Global Mountain Summit in 2009, which would review the progress made since the first summit in 2002. He invited experts from Member States, as well as the various institutes and organizations within the United Nations system, to participate in those events.

30. **Ms. Rodriguez Pineda** (Guatemala) said that she was pleased that the topics of mountains and renewable energy, both of which were of vital importance to Guatemala, were again on the agenda. Guatemala was facing environmental problems that until recently had been unthinkable and that were exacerbated by its economic and social vulnerability.

31. Deforestation and intensive agriculture, as well as natural disasters, had caused widespread damage. In 2005, tropical storm Stan had destroyed infrastructure and caused 4,000 deaths, mainly indigenous people. Guatemala needed international assistance to combat the effects of climate change on the land, both in tropical forests and in the mountains. More help was needed in capacity-building and technical assistance to plan and implement programmes, especially for indigenous communities in the mountains. Progress had been made on sustainable development in those areas, and indigenous communities were directly involved in decision-making, but much more must be done at the national and regional levels. As a member of the Mountain Partnership, Guatemala hoped to generate more investment and funding for sustainable development, particularly through innovative financing mechanisms, debt alleviation and payment for environmental services.

32. Her Government had introduced a law on incentives for renewable energy and was fostering private sector involvement to make new energy sources competitive in the market. It was also working on adaptation to climate change both in the western part of the country, which was prone to flooding and landslides, and in the east, which was prone to drought and famine. A new unit to combat desertification and drought had just been created to coordinate efforts on that front.

33. Tackling climate change required a coherent approach, through international cooperation backed by national policies and strategies, as well as proper funding and technology transfer. To deal with those issues, a Central American presidential summit to be held in 2008 would discuss a regional strategy on climate change and the environment, improvements to information, and the promotion of a new economic sector for climate-friendly goods and services.

34. **Mr. Brevik** (Norway) said that the international community had made huge progress in reaching a global consensus on the need for urgent action to save

the planet. Everyone knew that the current development model was unsustainable and that humankind was living beyond its means. Today's generation was not meeting the needs of the present, let alone safeguarding the ability of future generations to meet theirs. In the *Global Environment Outlook 4* (GEO-4), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) recommended moving the environment from the periphery to the core of decision-making.

35. The world's understanding of the interconnection between sustainable development and climate change was more advanced than ever. Addressing climate change and pursuing economic development were not, therefore, mutually exclusive. The challenge was to find new, low-carbon growth models that allowed countries to grow and prosper without repeating the mistakes and unsustainable growth patterns followed in the industrial world.

36. The Norwegian Prime Minister's recent decision to ask the Minister of International Development to take over the post of Minister of the Environment in addition to his current portfolio illustrated the extent to which Norway considered poverty alleviation, climate change and environmental degradation to be interconnected. His Government had recently announced comprehensive policies on climate change and policies aimed at integrating environmental concerns into its development cooperation. It had also pledged to exceed its Kyoto Protocol emissions commitment by 10 per cent and cut total emissions by 30 per cent compared to 1990 levels by 2020. Between half and two thirds of that effort was expected to come through domestic emissions reductions. Norway aimed to be carbon neutral by 2050. It planned to achieve that by significantly reducing its own emissions and offsetting the remaining emissions by purchasing emissions reductions abroad.

37. The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction was a key element in the global drive towards sustainable development. To ensure that Norway played a constructive role in that drive, his Government was finalizing a white paper on the prevention of humanitarian crises. That paper included policies aimed at stepping up efforts to prevent humanitarian crises caused by climate change and environmental factors; argued for closer linkages and synergies between short-term humanitarian assistance and long-term development assistance; and focused on the links between sustainable development, on the one hand, and conflict and peacebuilding, on the other.

38. Any work done under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention on Biological Diversity and their subsidiary bodies should be holistic and integrated. Strengthened cooperation would promote complementarities and synergies locally and nationally and ensure that measures adopted under one Convention did not undermine the goals of the others. Lastly, the Committee should work to ensure that the Climate Change Conference to be held in Bali in December resulted in forceful decisions that transformed States' common concerns into a new consensus on the way forward.

39. **Mr. Meñez** (Philippines) said that, for several years, the Philippines had been following a clear sustainable development strategy in the form of a Philippine Agenda 21, which was supported, in turn, by a Business Agenda 21. The Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan 2004-2010 comprised five major thematic thrusts: sustainable use of natural resources, sustainable mining, protection of vulnerable and ecologically fragile areas, a healthy environment, and natural disaster mitigation. Civil society also played a key role in raising awareness of the benefits of sustainable development.

40. As a result, the Government, the private sector and civil society were working together to improve the environment without sacrificing the need to foster economic development and thereby improve people's lives. In an effort to protect the almost 9 million hectares of forest in the Philippines, forest products worth an estimated 54 million pesos that had been cut down and transported illegally had been confiscated. The Government was promoting ecologically sustainable technologies and had recently enacted the Philippine Biofuels Act, which provided the policy environment for diversifying energy sources, thereby promoting indigenous, renewable and sustainable clean energy sources.

41. However, some challenges could be addressed only through international cooperation and action. At the High-level Event on Climate Change, his Government had outlined the need for the global private sector to play a more active role in developing cleaner technologies and pointed out that almost all

developing countries lacked the financial resources needed to respond adequately to the effects of climate change. It had also raised cross-cutting policy concerns on financing, and technological and capacity-related challenges and constraints at the May 2007 session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

42. The Philippines was preparing for the Bali Climate Change Conference in December through a multi-stakeholder approach. Earlier that month, it had held its first National Conference on Climate Change Adaptation, organized primarily for local government units, with input from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative and the World Agroforestry Centre.

43. Lastly, he conveyed his delegation's support for the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/62/262).

44. **Mr. Metelitsa** (Belarus) said that the global demand for energy could be met only by increasing the use of alternative and renewable energy sources and by promoting new energy-saving technologies. Belarus had developed a new concept of energy security, which would require significant financial and technological resources but would provide for the introduction of energy-saving technologies in active production lines, the creation of new productive capacities on the basis of such technologies and an increase in the share of alternative and renewable energy sources. His delegation hoped that UNDP and other agencies of the United Nations system would provide as much assistance as possible to Belarus for the full implementation of that concept.

45. The United Nations should begin to take practical measures for the global transfer and dissemination of new energy-saving technologies and technologies involving the use of alternative and renewable energy sources. Such measures should also ensure that those technologies became accessible to developing countries. In that connection, his delegation proposed that the General Assembly should, at its sixty-third session, hold a debate on technologies involving the use of alternative and renewable energy sources as the global commons.

46. With regard to climate change, Belarus was the first country to propose an amendment to annex B of the Kyoto Protocol whereby it assured a commitment to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. The amendment had been adopted at the most recent session of the United Nations Climate Change Conference, but accepted thus far by only three States. His delegation therefore called on the representatives of all countries that were parties to the Kyoto Protocol and the representatives of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to work towards the swift completion of the domestic procedures necessary for the amendment to come into force.

47. The agreement to replace the Kyoto Protocol must have a more flexible mechanism that allowed States to assume quantitative obligations to reduce their emissions. Otherwise an absurd situation could arise in which a State prepared to assume such obligations was prevented from doing so by red tape. A unanimous decision by the parties to the new agreement should be sufficient to establish obligations under the agreement, including those involving emission reductions.

48. **Mr. Guillén** (Peru) said that GEO-4 revealed a great deal about the current state of the environment and clearly demonstrated the urgency of addressing what it called "persistent problems". Such problems, while difficult to manage, were key to achieving global environmental sustainability. Inaction threatened all humanity. A root cause of the current pressure on the environment was the persistent poverty affecting over half the world's population and poverty eradication was essential to creating a sustainable planet. Development policies must balance sustained economic growth with social development and environmental protection. In order for sustainable development goals to be achieved, the international community must build capacity in developing countries and promote the transfer of environmentally clean and energy-efficient technologies. More specific commitments and targets were needed in that regard.

49. Climate change, which had repercussions for development and international security, had a disproportionate effect on developing countries. In addition, environmental degradation had increased the destructive potential of, and sometimes even triggered, disasters, as illustrated by the number of major hydrological disasters in the last 55 years. The inextricably linked challenges of global warming and current disaster trends must be addressed in an integrated manner. The frequency and intensity of

extreme climatic phenomena was unprecedented, owing at least in part to human activity.

50. In that connection, participants in the Bali Climate Change Conference must draw up a road map and common platform so that negotiations on the future regime could begin as soon as possible. The emissions reduction targets adopted needed to be more ambitious than those agreed during the first period of commitments. Peru would work to achieve a common platform that took account of the instruments agreed during the first period and was based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibility.

51. Mountain ecosystems were very vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and must therefore be protected, by means of a long-term political commitment and a sustainable development strategy. He hoped that, at the current session, progress would be made so as to create the right conditions for the sustainable development of people who depended on mountain ecosystems and eradicate the poverty affecting so many of them.

52. Peru had recently participated in the official launch of the International Year of the Potato (2008) and was actively preparing for its celebration. The Year provided a unique opportunity to promote the biological, nutritional and culinary value of the potato, which dated back over 8,000 years and had been domesticated by the ancient inhabitants of the Peruvian Andes. The potato was now an essential part of the culture and diet of many countries and had been fundamental tool in the fight against the famine that had devastated certain parts of the world a few decades earlier. The Year was also an opportunity to conduct further scientific research into the potato's diversity with a view to improving production and thereby enabling it to continue to be used to combat hunger and malnutrition throughout the world, particularly in mountain areas.

53. Peru attached particular importance to renewable and alternative energy sources. Hydropower was a key component in Peru's energy infrastructure. Hydraulic power accounted for 47 per cent of Peru's total installed power and, a few years previously, 76 per cent of the electricity produced in the country had been generated by water. Peru had made energy diversification a priority, but faced major obstacles, particularly in the area of financial resources and clean technology transfer. Hence the importance of promoting regional and international cooperation, and private sector involvement.

54. **Mr. Dah** (Côte d'Ivoire), recalling that the Ivorian economy was based on agriculture and, therefore, subject to climatic influences, said that the effects of climate change were environmental, economic and social and would probably increase with time, potentially reaching catastrophic dimensions in some parts of the globe within a few decades. National experts and UNDP had noted a gradual and alarming temperature rise in Côte d'Ivoire. As temperatures increased, rainfall decreased, threatening the agricultural sector. According to experts, climate variability linked to fluctuating rainfall caused further rural impoverishment and environmental degradation, and seriously threatened food security.

55. Climate change affected all countries. However, its impact was felt much more in the developing world, particularly Africa, where it undermined efforts to eradicate poverty and to attain the Millennium Development Goals. Climate change must therefore be seen not as an essentially environmental issue, but as a development issue that must be addressed through an integrated approach in line with the principles of sustainable development. Of course, efforts to combat climate change must go hand in hand with, not replace, development assistance.

56. The international community must adopt measures to help States prepare themselves for the effects of climate change. However, given the potentially catastrophic events to come, it would be irresponsible for the world to simply sit back and trust in mankind's ability to adapt and scientific progress to save it. Mitigation was the best form of adaptation, as any delay in reducing emissions would only increase the need and cost of adaptation and the risk of unchecked climate change. The clean development mechanism, which aimed to reduce or eliminate greenhouse gas emissions in developing countries, must be implemented in an equitable manner. Most of the few projects implemented thus far targeted the largest developing countries, as they were the major emissions producers. Smaller and poorer developing countries, despite being the most vulnerable to the impact of climate change, had generally been overlooked.

57. Development partners must make carbon funds more accessible so as to promote climate change

adaptation in Africa and help African countries meet their energy needs while moving towards cleaner energy. In addition, African countries must be assisted in developing new sectors, such as renewable energy, and in designing and certifying clean development mechanism projects. Under a new policy of his Government, Ivorian citizens were being encouraged to plant trees in an attempt to offset deforestation.

58. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol were a solid basis for multilateral action. While some progress had been made on their implementation, the measures adopted thus far were insufficient, owing to developed countries' reluctance to change their development models and developing countries' legitimate concerns about their development prospects. At the current critical juncture, there was an urgent need for consensus on the way forward.

59. Developing and developed countries had a shared responsibility to formulate a concept of development that met the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. Solutions did exist. All that was needed was a desire to implement them.

60. **Mr. Borg** (Malta) recalled that Malta had placed climate change on the international political agenda for the first time in 1988 by asking the Secretary-General to include on the agenda of the Assembly's forty-third session an item entitled "Conservation of climate as part of the common heritage of mankind" and had piloted the draft resolution later unanimously adopted as resolution 43/53 on the protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind. That initiative almost 20 years earlier had led to the adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol.

61. The Prime Minister of Malta had proposed the establishment of a mechanism, possibly a group of experts, which would report to the Assembly at its sixty-third session on activities undertaken over the past 20 years in response to climate change. The report should include elements of a possible future global strategy and propose innovative measures to encourage the widest possible cooperation among States in ensuring an effective international response to the negative impacts of climate change in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and their respective capabilities and socio-economic conditions. Together with the outcome of the Bali Climate Change Conference, the report would serve as a blueprint for a future global strategy. Malta's proposal aimed to consolidate United Nations efforts in responding globally and coherently by climate change mitigation and adaptation, taking into account the special needs of small island States. As the Secretary-General had stated at the end of the High-level Event on Climate Change, economic and social development could not be sustainable unless the international community dealt decisively with climate change. As a small island State vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change, Malta understood that message. As part of its continuing contribution, it intended to host a centre to train Government officials in climate law and policy. The centre's activities would focus on the needs of developing States, particularly small island States.

62. **Mr. Vassylenko** (Ukraine) said that Ukraine was firmly committed to its obligations under Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the 2005 World Summit Outcome. His Government had recently approved a national environment strategy, which sought to strengthen environmental governance locally and nationally, and promote an integrated approach to sustainable development by mainstreaming environmental considerations into national programmes. Sound national environmental policies coupled with good governance were key to achieving sustainable development. The absence of an effective and comprehensive solution to the world's urgent ecological needs undermined sustainable development and threatened the very existence of mankind. Ecological challenges must be addressed through concerted international efforts, not just national efforts.

63. Recalling the 2005 World Summit Outcome's call for a more coherent institutional framework, he proposed creating, under the aegis of the United Nations, a permanent universal environmental organization where Governments, industrialists, scientists and civil society would, through constructive dialogue, resolve ecological conflicts of interest. National delegations to the proposed organization should include representatives from competent State bodies, the business sector, the field of ecological science and environmental NGOs.

64. To attain the Millennium Development Goals, the international community needed to establish an effective institutional framework capable of creating a

new ecological conscience and ecological solidarity and responsibility worldwide. Such a framework was the foundation for the comprehensive system of international ecological security that was essential for sustainable development and the very survival of civilization.

65. **Ms. Halliyadde** (Sri Lanka) said that climate change threatened to cause large-scale migration and to create greater competition for the Earth's resources, which might increase the danger of conflicts and wars. The world was already experiencing the disruptive effects of climate change, which would place an increasingly heavy burden on the most vulnerable countries in particular. The international community therefore had no choice but to develop a comprehensive, collective response to that global threat.

66. As a country which recognized the importance of participating in the clean development mechanism, Sri Lanka had acceded to the Kyoto Protocol in 2002. In keeping with its obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Sri Lanka has submitted an initial national communication to that body in October 2000 and had prepared its first inventory of greenhouse gases in 1994. It was preparing the second national communication and was expected to update the inventory of greenhouse gases.

67. At the second International Conference on Climate Change and Tourism, held recently in Davos, Sri Lanka had announced an initiative entitled "A Tourism Earth Lung — Towards a Carbon Clean Sri Lanka". As a small country which depended heavily on long-haul travel to generate tourism income, Sri Lanka aimed to become the first carbon neutral destination: its tropical forest systems could store large amounts of carbon which would otherwise add to the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Sri Lanka had also initiated action to include tourism within the framework of its carbon trading policy and would take significant steps to make Sri Lanka a carbon neutral country within a specific time frame.

68. Mechanisms must be established to enable developing countries to engage in carbon trading and to trade in the value represented by the forest cover. While traditional knowledge and experience should be used to maintain such forest cover, relevant technology and financial assistance should also be made available to developing countries to enable them to adopt environmentally friendly approaches to development. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change must also adopt the Adaptation Fund under the Kyoto Protocol.

69. **Mr. Tarragô** (Brazil) said that the focus on climate change had intensified recently, particularly following the fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and in the run-up to the forthcoming Bali Climate Change Conference. His delegation believed that it would be possible in Bali for the international community to agree on a road map for negotiations on the future of the Kyoto Protocol regime. Those negotiations should be undertaken in a spirit of full transparency and their outcome should guarantee the operation and continuation of market instruments, such as the clean development mechanism, while also recognizing historical responsibility for past emissions and adopting the principle that the polluter should pay.

70. Targets should be defined for annex I countries for the post-2012 period based on scientific approaches and with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. It was important to emphasize that the Kyoto Protocol did not "expire" in 2012. Thus, it was not accurate to refer to a "post-Kyoto regime". Such inappropriate references sent the wrong signals to society and to markets and were inconsistent with the magnitude and urgency of the problem. Furthermore, the voluntary efforts made by developing countries to reduce their emissions should be supported by increased financial and technological transfers from annex I countries.

71. The ongoing consultations on environmental governance were of the utmost importance in view of the need for a more coherent and effective framework for United Nations environmental activities. In that connection, Brazil had recently organized the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Sustainable Development: Challenges for International Governance. While the areas of convergence had been highlighted in the final document of the Ministerial Conference (A/62/356), most of the differences that had emerged centred on the new institutional framework for United Nations environmental activities. Whatever institutional framework reforms were eventually agreed upon, sustainable development must be at the heart of the solution.

72. An improved framework for sustainable development was crucial for more efficient international governance in sustainable development in order to address environmental challenges. Measures to strengthen that structure must, inter alia: be developed in accordance with the Rio principles and Agenda 21; enable the Millennium Development Goals to be achieved and the commitments assumed under the Monterrey Consensus to be honoured; and take into account the needs of all countries, particularly developing countries, on the basis of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Institutional arrangements must not only strengthen the international environmental governance system but also be responsive to regional and national priorities, needs and capacities.

73. **Ms. Bovi** (San Marino) said that the fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change had clearly outlined the difficult challenges ahead and the urgent action needed. Her delegation agreed that climate change could be a serious obstacle to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and strongly believed in the need to focus efforts on making progress towards the use of new and renewable energy sources. It also agreed that international conferences, particularly with the regular participation of civil society and the private sector, provided important forums for exchanges of experience in that area. San Marino was drawing up a national energy plan to effectively promote the use of environmentally friendly new and renewable sources of energy. Such new legislation would substantially modify the energy and environmental habits of the entire nation and reduce its dependency on energy imports.

74. Water scarcity was another obstacle to poverty alleviation and socio-economic development. Effective water management strategies and educational programmes about more sustainable water use were therefore urgently required at all levels. Moreover, social policies must be based on sustainable development and respect for the Earth's resources. The current aggressive and indiscriminate exploitation of those resources would very soon change the world beyond all recognition. Immediate action was required to preserve the planet for the generations to come.

75. **Ms. Tembo** (Zambia) said that the achievement of sustainable development was no longer an option but a prerequisite for survival. Failure to adopt a more environmentally friendly development model would be a recipe for chaos and destruction. The Committee should reaffirm the continuing need to balance economic development, social development and environmental protection as interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development. Agenda 21 remained relevant and must be implemented by all Member States, together with the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Zambia had already applied the principles of sustainable development to its overall national development planning. In that regard, Zambia's Vision 2030 document and its fifth national development plan could be seen as a national strategy for sustainable development, which also incorporated the Millennium Development Goals.

76. At the intergovernmental level, the Commission on Sustainable Development played an indispensable role by providing a high-level forum for the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. The measures and actions agreed in the Commission had also built on those contained in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. While her delegation was disappointed that the fifteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development had failed to reach a consensus on a decision text, it urged all States to work towards a successful outcome to the sixteenth session.

77. Her delegation commended the Commission on Sustainable Development for its role in showcasing voluntary multi-stakeholder partnerships working on innovative models for the implementation of sustainable development goals. Partnership played a key role in complementing governmental efforts to meet the commitments entered into under the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Partnerships in Zambia had also made a significant contribution towards the implementation of programmes aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

78. The General Assembly should send a very clear message to the forthcoming Bali Climate Change Conference concerning the need to operationalize the mechanisms used to finance projects under the Convention in developing countries, particularly the Adaptation Fund under the Kyoto Protocol and the Special Climate Change Fund. Measures must also be put in place to ensure the equitable participation of all countries in the market-based mechanisms of the Kyoto

Protocol, including the clean development mechanism. While that mechanism had been designed to benefit developing countries, not all such countries had been able to participate in it. Her delegation urged developed countries to take the lead in emission reductions, in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and called for the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol to be strengthened while work began in earnest on a post-2012 agreement.

79. The international community must do more to help developing countries combat desertification, particularly in Africa, through the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. While Zambia had taken the initiative to prepare national action plans and to integrate them into its national development plans, those efforts were being undermined by the lack of financing for implementation of the Convention from multilateral agencies and institutions, including the Global Environment Facility. Her delegation therefore called for the Facility to be strengthened in the focal area of land degradation and for donors and the Facility Council to allocate more financial resources to land degradation in the fifth replenishment.

80. Her delegation also expressed concern about the lack of agreement on the negotiation of an international regime on access and benefit-sharing and wondered whether it would still be possible to meet the 2010 biodiversity target.

81. **Ms. Radu** (Moldova) said that, as a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Moldova was committed to contributing to international efforts to moderate human impact on the global climate and had undertaken a number of activities in that respect, including the preparation of a greenhouse gas inventory, the development of adaptation measures and the promotion of educational programmes to raise awareness among the population. While Moldova had no obligations under the Kyoto Protocol to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions, over the past 15 years such emissions in Moldova had fallen by more than 25 per cent. Her Government had already developed its first national communication and had drafted a plan of actions to alleviate the environmental and socio-economic impacts of climate change. The next step was to identify possible ways to rehabilitate the most important economic sectors and to introduce renewable energy sources in order to further reduce emissions.

82. As a new democracy, Moldova was faced with the problem of attempting to transition to a market economy while lacking sufficient resources to meet the increasing demand for energy. Her Government was therefore promoting the use of biofuels and biomass as renewable sources of energy. A few experimental wind installations were also producing electricity in the few suitable parts of the country.

83. Moldova was currently working to harmonize its laws and standards with those of the European Union. In that respect, national priorities included implementing the European Union Water Framework Directive, preventing the loss of biodiversity, managing obsolete organic pollutants and ensuring effective land management. Several projects were being carried out in cooperation with the Global Environment Facility, the World Bank, UNEP and UNDP.

84. Climate change and desertification were connected, posing a threat to sustainable development in general and to developing countries in particular. Given the increasing devastation caused by climate change, it was regrettable that international efforts to combat such phenomena remained rather modest. The international community must therefore adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach, which should encompass short-, medium- and long-term goals while also incorporating the specific challenges faced by each country. It must also be recalled that developing countries, countries in transition and least developed countries were the most vulnerable to climate change. The international community must therefore ensure that the impact of climate change on those countries did not undermine their ability to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

85. The recent drought in Moldova had affected over 80 per cent of the nation's farmland, resulting in a significant loss of livestock and agricultural produce. Her delegation expressed its gratitude to all the Governments, international organizations and public and private agencies that had provided assistance to Moldova during that difficult period. The negative impact of the drought had been particularly severe because the majority of the Moldovan population lived in rural areas and agriculture was their main source of income. In response, Moldova was drafting a sustainable agricultural policy, designed to mitigate potential losses from drought in the coming decades.

However, such national efforts would be successful only as part of wider, more global efforts.

86. Her delegation called for agreement as soon as possible on an ambitious, comprehensive treaty, negotiated within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and building on the Kyoto Protocol. A binding, multilateral formula should set clear and quantifiable targets for industrialized and developing countries. Only the United Nations could deliver a truly multilateral solution and it should therefore provide the framework for negotiations by all countries.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.